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613 621 innumerable cognatic ties, so that however many lineages there may be in a local community their members are all related to one another by some kind of cognation and affinity. A lineage remains an exclusive agnatic group only in ritual situations. In other situations it is merged in the community, and cognation (*mar*) takes the place of lineage agnation (*buth*) as the value through which people living together express their relations to one another. The agnatic structure of the dominant lineage is not stressed in ordinary social relations, but only on a political plane where relations between territorial segments are concerned, for the assimilation of territorial segments to segments of the dominant lineage means that the interrelations of the one are expressed in terms of the other.

In every small tribal segment there is a lineage of the dominant clan of the tribe associated with it, and the members of the segment are joined to this lineage by adoption, cognatic kinship, or kinship fictions, in such a way that one may speak of them as an accretion around a lineage nucleus. As these different nuclei are lineages of the same clan, or, as we shall see in the next section, assimilated to it, the structure of the dominant clan is to the political system like the anatomical structure to the system of an organism.

X

000 We have seen how Dinka and strangers are linked to the framework of the dominant clan by adoption and cognation and how these links form an embracing kinship system which provides the non-political texture of the political system. Kinship values are the strongest sentiments and norms in Nuer society and all social interrelations tend to be expressed in a kinship idiom. Adoption and the assimilation of cognatic to agnatic ties are two ways in which community relations are translated into kinship relations: in which living together forces residential relations into a kinship pattern. A third way is by mythological creation of kinship fictions, and this way is appropriate to relations between dominant lineages and stranger and Dinka groups, living with them in the same tribal segments, which are too large and occupy too distinct a territory for incorporation by either of the other two methods. It is the way

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in which large pockets of strangers and Dinka are incorporated into the conceptual scheme of a tribe.

It has frequently been emphasised that political relations are often expressed in speech as lineage relations, in the sense that one talks of a local community as though it were a lineage, thereby assimilating to a dominant lineage those who share the same community life with it; and that lineage relations are often expressed as political relations, in the sense that one talks of a lineage as though it were identical with the local community in which it is only a nucleus, thereby depriving the lineage of its unique agnatic status and giving it a general residential value. In conformity with this way of describing community interrelations, they are personified in myths and derived from personal relationships of a kinship kind.

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We do not propose to give a collection of Nuer myths. We have so far only mentioned one myth explaining group interrelations: that which tells why the Nuer raid the Dinka. There are very few myths of this general kind. Most relate to clans and lineages in their corporate territorialised form and explain their association with one another as tribes and tribal segments, particularly the relations between dominant lineages and large stranger lineages living with them. We are not always able to explain mythological relations by the present-day political system, but this can often be done, and where we fail to do it we attribute our inability to ignorance, especially to ignorance of tribal history.

The two large Lou tribal sections, the Jimac and the Jaajoah which appear on the map on p. 56, but not on the clan tree of the JIMACA, the dominant clan of the tribe, on p. 196, are divisions called after the JIMAC and JAAJOAH lineages. They are said to be *gaat nyiet*, children of daughters of the founder of the JIMACA clan, and there is a myth accounting for this maternal link. Dimac was said to have had, according to the Lou story, four sons, named Yin, Duk, Bal, and Bany, by one wife, and Nyang and two nameless brothers by a second wife. These wives are sometimes said to have been called Nyagun and Nyamor and the two primary sections of the tribe, Gun and Mor, to be named after them. Nyang's two brothers were eaten by an ogre. When, afterwards, the sons of Dimac went fishing, the four sons of one mother went by themselves and Nyang by himself, for he would not accompany his half-

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561 another hospitality and to share their possessions. Fighting is
571 considered an appropriate mode of behaviour between age-mates, but a man ought not to fight a man of a senior set. The comradeship between age-mates springs from a recognition of a mystical union between them, linking their fortunes, which derives from an almost physical bond, analogous to that of true kinship, for they have shed their blood together. (4) Members
561 of a set are expected to show respect to members of senior sets,
576 and their deference to them can be seen in discussions, in
626 etiquette, in division of food, and so forth. Whenever there is a question about the propriety of speech or action it is judged by reference to the relative positions of the persons concerned in the age-set structure, if kinship status is not also involved. Since every man has a known age-relationship to every other man in Nuerland with whom he is likely to come into contact, their social attitude to him, and his social attitude to them, is determined in advance by the distances between them in age-set structure, unless kinship takes precedence. Although it is possible for a man to avenge a breach of these patterns of behaviour by a curse, if it is a very serious breach, the ordinary sanctions of conduct are a man's conscience and desire for approval.

561 It will have been noted that the relations between the sets
601 are defined in the idiom of family relationships. The members of a man's father's age-set are his 'fathers' and the members of his father's brothers' 'age-sets' are, in a less precise sense, also his 'fathers'. The sons of a man's set are his 'sons', and they may fall into several sets. The wives of members of a man's father's set are his 'mothers', and the wives of members of his sons' sets are his 'daughters'. All members of a man's own set are likewise 'brothers', though here the analogy is seldom expressed because the comradeship between age-mates is strongly affirmed in the idiom of the system, for they are all *ric*, age-mates, to one another. As, in any case, a man commonly addresses all persons much senior to himself as 'father' and 'mother', all persons much junior to himself as 'son' and 'daughter', and all persons of about the same age as himself as 'brother' and 'sister', the terminology of address between different sets is not a differentiating one and it cannot be said how

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far it is determined by specific age-set relationships. When speaking about sets senior to his own, but not that of his father or the set immediately senior to his own, a Nuer sometimes speaks about them collectively as though all their members were his fathers-in-law and their wives his mothers-in-law, for he is courting their daughters and is likely to marry one of them and so is circumspect in his dealings with their parents. Thus a *Lilkgac* son of a *Maker* father regards members of the *Dangunga* set and their wives as potential fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law.

The age-set system thus influences persons through a kinship idiom and on the pattern of kinship. The sets never act corporately, but they function locally between individuals and, in ceremonial situations, between small aggregates of persons who live near to one another, for a man only has frequent contacts with those members of his set and of other sets who live in his district. No doubt relative positions in age-set structure to some extent determine behaviour between neighbours, and it can sometimes be observed that they determine it, but it is difficult to say to what extent, for men who live near one another are not only members of the same age-set or of different age-sets but are also kinsmen or affines. The age-set patterns of behaviour are, except in specific rites, of so general a nature that they cannot be isolated in a community where everyone is related in a number of different ways to everybody else. We have noted how persons who live together are always able to express their relations to one another in the language of kinship and how, when they are not actual kinsmen, they are recognized as equivalent to such by adoption or through some traditional, or mythological, connexion. The age-set stratification of all men, and by analogy all women, into groups whose inter-relations are on the pattern of family relationships is one of the ways by which community relations are expressed in kinship patterns and is comparable to the classificatory system of kinship nomenclature in its assimilation of social relations to a few elementary types. Age-relations are part of the general social ties of a kinship type which unite all persons living in a community. The members of a local group have group relations only with other groups of the same kind and it is these relations

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which we call political. They also have manifold contacts with one another—economic, ceremonial, food, play, and so forth—and political relations may be viewed as a specific organization of the texture of social ties, which control these contacts, in certain situations. It is this action of the age-set system, in establishing ties between members of local communities and in giving them a kinship value, that we chiefly stress in a political context rather than its indication of leadership, for outside small kinship and domestic groups the authority derived from seniority is negligible, and the sets lack leadership and administrative and judicial functions.

561 619

The age-set system has been briefly treated because of this action and also because, in the larger tribes at any rate, it is a tribal institution. It segments the male population of a tribe into stratified groups which stand in a definite relationship to one another and it cuts across territorial divisions, giving identity of status where there is political disparity and differentiating status where there is political identity. However, the political system and the age-set system do not seem to be interdependent. Both are consistent in themselves and to some extent overlap and influence one another, but it is easy to conceive of the political system existing without an age-set organization. There is evidence in East Africa that political development produces atrophy of the age-set organization. In conclusion we would again emphasize that adjacent tribes co-ordinate their sets and that the sets of any tribe are easily translated into the sets of another tribe. Initiation rites, more than anything save language, distinguish Nuer culture and give Nuer that sense of superiority which is so conspicuous a trait of their character. Only in the sense that age-sets are organized tribally and are common to all tribes can there be said to be a correspondence between the age-set system and the political system. There is no positive structural correspondence of the kind we have noted between the lineage system of dominant clans and tribal segmentation. It may be said, therefore, that whereas the political system and the lineage system of dominant clans are interdependent, the political system and the age-set systems are only a combination, in Nuer society. We may add that the common assumption that an age-set system merely by

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561 881 initiation. He is a *nat*, a man, whereas before he was one of the *dwiel* (boys). He is now treated by his elders as a man and he has close contacts with the cattle; he herds them, has his own ox and takes an ox name. He goes to dances and indulges in love-making and flirting as the preliminaries to marriage.

561 764 582 Certain ritual observances are practised between members of the same age set, and between members of different sets: sets are segregated at sacrificial feasts; members of a set cannot bury an age mate or participate in the mortuary ceremonies; a man may not marry or have sexual relations with the daughter of an age mate, for he is as a father to her; a man should not marry a daughter of one of his father's age mates unless his or her father is dead, because the strained relations between the two fathers-in-law would be incompatible with the free and easy relations of equality which should exist between age mates.

561 Members of a junior set are expected to show respect to members of senior sets. Since every Nuer has an age relationship to every other Nuer, the attitudes and types of behaviour between two men are determined in advance of meeting, unless there is any particularly strong and overruling tie of kinship.

561 ●608 Relations between sets are defined in ordinary kinship terms. Members of a father's age set are fathers, their wives are mothers; members of one's own age set are brothers, their wives are sisters, and so forth. When speaking of a set immediately senior to his own, but not his father's, a man will call the men fathers-in-law and the women mothers-in-law, because he is usually courting the daughters of this age set in preparation for marriage.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage is not permitted between clansfolk, close cognates, close kinsfolk by adoption, close affines or persons who stand to one another as father and daughter in the age-set system. If it is uncertain whether the genealogical distance between a couple is wide enough to permit marriage, a sacrifice (generally a beast) will be offered to cut the bonds of kinship if any exist.(1)

There are several types of marriage among the Nuer.

588 1. *Ghost Marriage.* If a man dies before he has married or if his wife does not bear him male children, one of his close kinsmen has the obligation of marrying a wife to his name, for it is held that no initiated male should be allowed to lie in his grave unremembered in his children. A vicarious marriage is contracted, and the vicarious husband acts as though he were the true husband in the marriage ritual. Evans-Pritchard states that "in physiological and in domestic roles he is husband, in all but the legal sense..... The legal husband is the ghost in whose name the bride cattle are paid and the marriage ritual performed."(2) The ghost family is a legal family and such families are almost as numerous as simple

(1) Evans-Pritchard, "Nuer rules of exogamy and incest", 1949, p.90.
(2) Evans-Pritchard, "Some aspects of marriage and the family among the Nuer", 1930, pp.300-9.